

Raven, *Corvus coronoides*—Very widely distributed occurring in all habitats. This is one of the few species which occurs in the denser pine plantations. See note *W. Aust. Nat.*, 8, 1961: 29 for record of Raven feeding on oranges.

Little Crow, *C. bennetti*—See note in *W. Aust. Nat.*, 11, 1969: 100 regarding the occurrence of this species at Harvey. The Little Crow would appear to be a summer visitor to the clay zone. Mr. L. Knight, a farmer in this area, though unfamiliar with the literature on *Corvus*, has long recognised a large and a small species with differing habits. He considers that the Raven and not this species to be the one which attacks oranges.

### COMPARABLE MATERIAL

The foregoing notes follow a similar plan to that employed in Dr. D. L. Serventy's "Birds of the Swan River District, Western Australia", *Emu*, 47, 1948: 241-286.

E. Sedgwick's "Birds of the Rockingham District", *Emu*, 40, 1940: 129-152; 237-245, also follows the same general approach, but the emphasis is somewhat different as the author was living and working in the limestone zone whereas this present article probably has a clay zone bias.

Dr. D. L. Serventy's "Glimpse of the Bird Life between Mandurah and Bunbury, W.A.", *Emu* 30, 1930: 33-38, on the other hand treats of the limestone area.

The writer is preparing some notes on the avi-fauna of Benger swamp, situated three miles to the south of the study area. These will list a number of species not recorded here but which probably occur at least occasionally on the limited suitable habitat within the area treated in this paper.

## TWO ABORIGINAL CHARMS INCORPORATING FOSSIL GIANT MARSUPIAL TEETH

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### SUMMARY

Described are two charms from the West Kimberley District of Western Australia. Both incorporate fossil marsupial teeth in their makeup. The first, a mounted tooth of *Zygomaturus trilobus* was used for projection magic, the second, a small wallet containing four teeth of *Sthenurus browni* was used in wallaby increase ceremonies and for hunting magic. These charms were collected at different dates and from different individuals.

### INTRODUCTION

Early in 1971 my attention was directed to a paper (Playford & Lowry 1966: 107) in which it was mentioned that *Diprotodon* fossils had been found in Windjana Gorge in the West Kimberleys. Having collected in the West Kimberley District, particularly in the South-West, my interest was aroused. During a period between 1966-67 I had the opportunity to acquire a number of charms used for varying forms of magic. One of these charms was a large tooth (that I presumed to be camel, for want of better knowledge) mounted in gum and suspended from a rather frayed 19.00in. length of hair string.

This specimen I duly submitted to Mr. Michael Archer, a Fullbright scholar researching for a Ph.D. in marsupial palaeontology, and who is being supervised by Dr. W. D. L. Ride, Director of the Western Australian Museum. Archer's response to say the least was enthusiastic. On the spot identification showed the tooth to belong to an individual of the genus *Zygomaturus*. On Archer's insistence the specimen along with others in my collection, was presented to Dr. Dunean Merrilees, Curator of Palaeontology, W.A. Museum, for identification and a brief report.

Most of the other charms were kangaroo teeth, quartz crystals, Belemnites (used in projection magic), one wooden "love magic" propeller — "mundididjara" — collected with the *Zygomaturus* tooth, and a small emu feather wallet containing teeth.

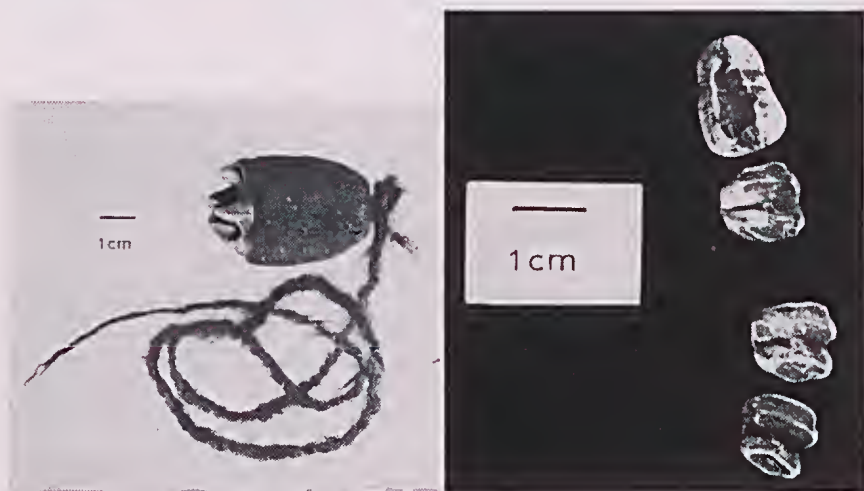
These teeth had been given to me as a kangaroo or wallaby increase and hunting charm. Examination of the contents however showed not four kangaroo teeth, but rather four teeth belonging to the extinct marsupial *Sthenurus*.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE TEETH

For the following brief description of the teeth I am indebted to Dr. Dunean Merrilees:

"The large tooth mounted in gum with string attached is an upper right permanent premolar of the extinct species *Zygomaturus trilobus*. It is somewhat larger than usual. This species has no close living relatives. The animal concerned would have been about the size of a Jersey cow, but possibly somewhat heavier. The nearest occurrence of this species to the Kimberley region at present known is from the Billabalong crossing of the Murehison River.

"Loose teeth in feather parcel: These teeth represent the extinct macropod *Sthenurus brownei*, an animal probably of about the height of a large modern grey kangaroo, but more heavily built. The teeth are an upper left permanent premolar, and three upper left molars, probably the second, third and fourth molars of the same animal from which came the premolar. The nearest occurrence of this species to the Kimberley region known at present is from Wanneroo, near Perth."



1 (A)

1 (B)

Plate I.—(a) The mounted *Zygomaturus* premolar tooth. (b) *Sthenurus* premolar and molars.

The question then arises — how did the Aborigines concerned come into possession of the teeth? Unfortunately, as the charms were not recognised for what they were at the time of collection, little information is to be had. Speculation to origins is also a weak solution but at this stage it is all that is available.

The fossils may have been found locally and if this is the case are the only verified specimens from the Kimberleys. There is also a possibility that they were traded into the Kimberleys from a location in the South-West of Western Australia. This would almost certainly mean that they would have been found early this century in order to pass along existing traditional trade routes. I favour the first hypothesis and believe that the fossils were local to the Kimberleys.



In a personal communication Merrilees mentions the fact that "the *Zygoniaturus* premolar and the *Sthenurus* premolar and molars all are enerusted with red matrix and presumably come from a fossil deposit. The red fine-grained matrix suggests that this deposit may be in a limestone cave, and there are many such caves in the Fitzroy basin". The red matrix, I feel sure, is ochre, and on examination of the *Sthenurus* teeth it can be seen that this ochre, does not penetrate all cavities and freshly broken surfaces can be seen. This leads me to believe that the *Sthenurus* teeth at least had only been recently exposed.

### NATURE OF THE CHARMS

The *Zygoniaturus* tooth was used in a form of projection magic and was itself known as "Tjagola". This it seems is rather a generic name for any unusual stones, bones, shells or teeth used in this way, and therefore gives no further clues to origin of the specimen. This was given to me in Derby by an Aboriginal from Mount Hart.

As was mentioned earlier the *Sthenurus* teeth were a hunting or increase charm. These were collected at Mowanjum Mission, from a Worora man, who also incidentally, brought in some archaic points from Winjana Gorge.

Apart from reporting two unusual, to say the least, charms, I feel that this case shows full well what happens when an enthusiastic but untrained collector manages to acquire something out of the ordinary. The ability to recognize and to record the sociological and functional implications of any artifact is important as it enhances and makes useful an interesting but otherwise barren artifact.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to both Mr. Michael Archer, who identified the teeth, and Dr. Dunean Merrilees who provided both the description and the plates.

### REFERENCES

- Merrilees, D. 1968. Man the Destroyer—late Quaternary Changes in Australian Marsupial Fauna. *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia*, 1-24. 51(1): 1-24.
- Playford, P. E. and D. C. Lowry. 1966. Devonian Reef Complexes on the Canning Basin, Western Australia. *Geol. Survey of W.A.*, Bulletin 118.

### FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Yellow-billed Spoonbill near Busselton.**—While touring the South-West in mid-January 1973, Mrs. Kath Stewart and I had a very good view of a Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*) at dusk on the Abba River, just north of Busselton. The bill and bare skin around the face and eyes appeared more pink than yellow, suggesting they were immature birds, as described in Slater's *A Field Guide to Australian Birds*.

—NOELA MARR.

**Quokka on the Albany Highway.**—In early May 1972, when on my way home from Perth, I noticed a small marsupial had been hit and killed by a passing vehicle, and, as it was not a Brush (*Macropus irma*), I stopped to examine it. To my surprise it was a Quokka (*Setonix brachyurus*). It was a few chains just past the 27 mile peg on the Albany Highway.

—DAWN CRABB, "Cheryton," Kojonup.

**Black-throated Butcher-bird at Woodmans Point.**—This species, *Cracticus nigrogularis*, is only an occasional visitor from the north to the Swan Coastal Plain, and Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Aus-*